

New headquarters becomes operational

By Gregory Ripps

470th Military Intelligence Brigade
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The 470th Military Intelligence (MI) Brigade held a ribbon cutting ceremony here Feb. 1 to mark the official opening of its new headquarters building, Building 1070, on Fort Sam Houston.

The ribbon cutting comes two years after the ground breaking, which took place Feb. 14, 2008. Situated near the 470th's previous home in historic Building 1000, Building 1070 will house the planning and operations of the brigade, which includes three of its five battalions on the first five of the six floors of the new 155,000-square-foot building.

Before the actual ribbon cutting, Maj. Gen. Simeon Trombitas, commanding general, U.S. Army South; Col. Mary Garr, commander, U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Sam Houston; Tom Chandler, president and chief operating officer, Orion Partners, Inc.; and Col. Jim Lee, 470th MI Brigade commander, each briefly addressed the crowd gathered in front of the building.

Trombitas said the building was the "finest of its kind" and a tribute to the Soldiers and civilians of the brigade. Garr said the building



would be an asset to all of Fort Sam Houston and challenged as well as congratulated the brigade on its new building.

Chandler, whose firm constructed the building in partnership with other contractors, said he was thrilled to attend the ribbon cutting. He noted that after the 10-year lease, the building would belong to the Army.

Alluding to the Army recruiting slogan, "Army of One," Chandler said, "Sometimes it's made of many parts." He explained that the many parts came together to complete the building project.

"In our ten years working with the Army, we have learned that the Army ... can operate together as one

to get things done, whether on the battlefields, where the Army is the world's greatest force, or in taking care of facility requirements," said Chandler. "Many units of the Army were challenged to make the 470th headquarters move possible ... all of whom worked together with ingenuity and creativity to make this day possible."

Lee touched on this in his own remarks: "The past three years have taken major efforts by the 470th, IMCOM [Installation Management Command] West, Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army Garrison, Orion, Army South, and many other hard working, diligent people to complete this great task."



From left, Tom Chandler, president and chief operating officer, Orion Partners, Inc.; Maj. Gen. Simeon Trombitas, commanding general, U.S. Army South; Col. Jim Lee, 470th Military Intelligence Brigade commander; Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Mason, 470th MI Brigade command sergeant major; and Col. Mary Garr, commander, U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Sam Houston, cut the ribbon officially opening Building 1070. The new building will serve as the headquarters for the brigade. (Photos by Gregory Rippes)

“This building and our new brigade headquarters represent a major milestone not only for the 470th MI Brigade but also for Fort Sam Houston and IMCOM West,” Lee also said. “It is the first-of-its-kind Enhanced Use Lease [EUL] building built from foundation to roof here on Fort Sam Houston.”

With the EUL program, the Army has had under-utilized but non-excess real estate assets on Department of Defense installations refurbished through competitive

bids by civilian firms. According to Maj. Ryan Fearnow, the brigade’s logistics officer, EULs help stimulate the local job market and improve community relations as well as offset declining military operations and maintenance budgets.

However, in 2007, the Assistant Secretary of the Army directed the Corps of Engineers to plan a new facility with a 10-year lease for the 470th MI Brigade. Consequently, Building 1070 is unique: it is not an old building in need of

redevelopment but a new building that still “leverages” the benefits of the traditional EUL.

Most importantly, however, Building 1070 consolidates elements of the 470th MI Brigade as it continues to train and deploy Soldiers to collect and analyze intelligence in support of major commands to parts of the world ranging from Iraq and Afghanistan to the Caribbean and Central and South America.